



# Facts from Belgium

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## BUSINESS INFRASTRUCTURE

### Your Business, Centrally Located

- Belgium lies at the heart of an area where 60% of Europe's purchasing power and 30% of EU consumers are concentrated.
- But for the northeast corridor of the U.S., Belgium lies at the heart of the largest concentration of wealth in the world.
- Within a radius of 300 miles, 140 million consumers can be reached (equivalent to almost 50% of the U.S. population)
- 80% of Belgian exports go to EU countries

### Optimal Access to European Markets

#### Road

- Highest-density road network worldwide

#### Rail

- High Speed Train (HST) links to Paris (1h 25), London (2h 40), Cologne (2h 30), Amsterdam (2h 40)
- Belgium's rail network has the fifth highest density network in the world, handling more than 60 million tons of freight in 2005
- Freight carrier B-Cargo offers daily transport to Europe's major economic zones, with no border stops and speeds up to 60mph.

#### Water

- With record cargo volume of 160 million tons and more than 15,000 vessels entering in 2005, Antwerp is the 5th largest port in the world (2nd in Europe), and the 2nd chemical cluster in the world.
- 4 major seaports (Antwerp, Ghent, Zeebrugge, Ostend), and 2 major river ports (Liège and Brussels) provide the biggest port concentration in Europe.
- More than 900 miles of inland waterways and canals provide the world's densest inland waterway network, connecting to all major Belgian cities, France, the Netherlands, the Rhine-Main-Danube network and Central and Eastern Europe.
- Belgium ranks 5th in the world for the quality of its port infrastructure

#### Air

- 5 international airports: Brussels, Antwerp, Ostend, Liège, Charleroi
- Brussels Airport:
  - ⇒ named best airport in Europe (Airport Council International, 2005); only 8 miles from the city
  - ⇒ 5th largest cargo airport in Europe; 40 cargo airlines fly to 81 destinations
  - ⇒ every 15 minutes a passenger rail service connects with city center and High Speed Train (HST) network
  - ⇒ 73 airlines carry passengers to 131 destinations
- courier and distribution services: DHL (Brussels), TNT (Liège), FedEx (Brussels European HQ)

### Access to Highly Trained and Productive Labor Force

#### Productivity

- Belgian workforce ranked 6th worldwide for productivity/hour (World Competitiveness Yearbook, 2005)

#### Language Skills and Education

- 16 university centers and an extensive community of scientific institutes employ about 50,000 full-time researchers

Belgian Rankings, World Competitiveness Yearbook 2005

Quality of math and science education	3rd
Quality of management schools	7th
Language skills of workforce	9th
Quality of scientific research institutions	9th



## Fewer Formalities to Employ Foreign Professionals

- ⇒ No work permit and work authorization for many managers, researchers from outside the EU
- ⇒ Simplified procedure to obtain temporary residency permit for many managers, researchers from outside the EU
- ⇒ Exemption of need to obtain work permit-work authorization for short-term assignments
- ⇒ Simplified procedure to obtain professional card for independent professionals from outside the EU

## One of the Lowest Real Estate Costs in Europe

Office rent costs (€/sq.m./year)		Warehouse rent costs (€/sq.m./year)	
Budapest	222	Antwerp	47
Prague	228	Paris	55
Warsaw	240	Milan	57
<b>Brussels</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>Brussels</b>	<b>60</b>
Barcelona	291	Prague	61
Manchester	301	Warsaw	66
Amsterdam	320	Frankfurt	70
Frankfurt	384	Budapest	70
Luxembourg	400	Luxembourg	78
Milan	500	Amsterdam	85
Dublin	511	Barcelona	102
Paris	700	Dublin	121
London	888	London	130
Copenhagen	1775	Copenhagen	500

Source: Jones Lang Lasalle, 2005

## Sector Advantages

- Belgium is the best country in Europe to locate a **distribution or logistics center**, thanks mainly to its low rents and excellent accessibility (*European Distribution Report, Cushman & Wakefield, Healey & Baker*)
- **Telecom:**
  - ⇒ Belgium offers 90% cable penetration, with advanced fiber-optic network in place for large bandwidth connections
  - ⇒ Belgium has the second lowest broadband costs worldwide, ranks 8th for number of broadband subscribers per 1000 people
- Belgium has 9th lowest **electricity** costs for industrial clients worldwide
- Belgium has the largest number of **clinical trials** per capita in Europe, evidence of the close interaction between research labs and medical schools
- Belgium has been ranked no.1 in terms of innovation and industry development in the **biopharmaceutical sector**. Factors included: patent applications, drugs under development, venture capital, number of companies. (*OECD, Innovation in Biopharmaceutical Technology, 2006*)

## Supportive Government

- The time needed to start a company has been reduced to three days.
- Thanks to the latest reforms, Belgium will become the fastest country in Europe for a company set-up, according to data from the World Bank. In its report "Doing Business in 2007", the World Bank also noted that the cost to set up a business had declined by 50% in 2005.
- Award-winning commitment to e-government, support of e-business

## Further Information

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